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AGRICULTURAL  
STATISTICS  
SERVICE

P.O. Box 41505  
Nashville, TN 37204-1505  
1-800-626-0987

<http://www.nass.usda.gov/tn>

cooperating with  
Tennessee Department  
of Agriculture



# Agri-News

**Gene Danekas**  
**State Statistician**

[nass-tn@nass.usda.gov](mailto:nass-tn@nass.usda.gov)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **TOBACCO -THE BRIGHT SPOT FOR ROW CROPS IN 2000**

The late summer and fall crop season is turning out disappointing and a below average one in terms of yield per acre for Tennessee farmers. The lone exception is tobacco, where yields are well above normal and the best since 1994. Many dark type tobacco growers are reporting the finest yield potential ever. Gene Danekas, State Statistician with the Tennessee Agricultural Statistics Service, summarized the farmers plight for 2000 as follows, "Low commodity prices along with average to below average yields are causing rising concerns among producers. Tobacco yields, as of September 1, are providing the only above average expectations". The latest survey based on farmers' expectations of final yields as of the first of September, shows the following: **Corn, 108 bu per acre**, 6 bushels above 1999 but below the five-year average of 110; **Cotton, 565 pounds of lint per acre** compared to 505 pounds in 1999 and the 5- year average of 579 pounds. Soybeans, **26 bushels per acre**, 8 bushels above the drought of 1999 but off sharply from the five year average of 30; **Burley Tobacco, 2,100 pounds per acre**, the highest yield in Tennessee since 1994. Danekas went on to say, "When looking at these figures, which are only slightly below normal, we are at least experiencing somewhat of a production comeback from the severe drought of 1999." Ideal weather this spring allowed farmers to plant crops on time and provided the young plants with adequate moisture until August 1. Rainfall deficits, particularly in portions of Middle Tennessee during July, reduced yield potential. In August, many West Tennessee areas suffered through a period of insufficient rainfall all month. Crop conditions around September 1 were highly variable depending on the crop, it's stage of development, the amount of rainfall, and the degree of heat stress. Based on this scenario, expectations range from extremely poor to excellent.

## **TOBACCO PROSPECTS BEST SINCE '94'**

The major tobacco growing regions of Tennessee, although too hot and dry for optimum yields for most crops, received just enough timely rainfall that a very good overall tobacco crop is predicted, especially for Type 23, Western Dark Fire-cured. Typical problems with black shank and blue mold have been reported, but the dry weather seems to have kept these diseases in-check with only the lower leaves affected in many cases. Producers have almost completed topping and sucker control while about 80 percent of the crop is in the barn. Early curing conditions have been satisfactory. The tobacco, however, has been difficult to handle because of it's high moisture content. Growers have stated they will need to be careful in managing the curing process as conditions have been ideal for "sweating". Burley yields are forecast at 2,100 pounds per acre, 210 pounds more than in 1999 and the best projected average since the crop of 1994. Total burley production, forecast at 94.5 million pounds, is 9 percent below last year's level, but, if realized, would be approximately 9 percent above the effective quota. The drop in production is a direct result of the 45 percent cut in the quota which led to a 10,000 acre decrease in harvested area to an estimated 45,000. Tennessee's dark-fired tobacco yields are forecast at 2,500 pounds for Type 22, Eastern Dark-Fired and a record 3,000 pounds for Type 23, Western Dark-Fired. Type 35, Dark Air-Cured is forecast at a record 2,200 pounds per acre.

## **COTTON PROSPECTS REMAIN GOOD DESPITE EXTREMELY HOT, DRY AUGUST**

Tennessee cotton producers are anticipating slightly below average yields for 2000 but much improved from the drought levels of 1999. The season proceeded very well until August. Spring planting was completed on-schedule by mid-May and it received timely rainfall through July. Insect pressure has been normal this year. In August, extremely hot, dry conditions persisted and the crop shed more than the normal fruit and squares. Cotton is now beginning to shut down mainly due to the extreme heat and lack of a "good" August rain. The crop is maturing about one week ahead of normal, but a few days behind last season. One more good general rain in August may have pushed this crop to near-record levels. Yields are forecast at 565 pounds per acre. If realized, total production of 700,000 bales will be 18 percent more than was produced a year ago and the largest amount since 1995. Acres for harvest are estimated at 595,000, up 30,000 from 1999.

**(OVER)**



SOYBEAN YIELD PROSPECTS DIMINISH UNDER AUGUST DRY WEATHER

For the second consecutive year, Tennessee’s soybeans have baked under relentless hot, dry August conditions, especially in the southern half of West Tennessee. As a result, the State average yield potential has dropped 13 percent from August 1 to an expected 26 bushels per acre, compared with the 1999 yield of 18 and the five-year average of 30. Yield prospects are highly variable, ranging from very poor to excellent. Throughout the month, most West and Middle Tennessee counties experienced some pod and flower shed. Some relief came to upper West and Middle Tennessee as showers spread across portions of the State during the last week of August. On September 1, wheat-beans were flowering and setting pods while full-season beans were filling. Total production from the 1.16 million acres is forecast at 30.2 million bushels, 41 percent more than was produced last year.

CORN YIELDS VARIABLE ACROSS THE STATE

The corn crop in Tennessee looks to be better than the one produced a year ago, especially in West Tennessee, where the crop was planted early and received plenty of moisture during the critical pollination stage. For Middle Tennessee farmers, the story is slightly different. The majority of this corn was planted later in the Spring, with much of it pollinating during a very hot, dry period, adversely affecting yields. East Tennessee producers report the corn crop in their region is in good condition. Corn yields are forecast at 108 bushels per acre, resulting in 63.7 million bushels of total production, up 10 percent from a year ago and the highest level in the State since 1996.

CROP FORECASTS: TENNESSEE AND UNITED STATES, SEPTEMBER 1, 2000, WITH COMPARISONS

Crop	Unit	Harvested Acres		Yield Per Acre		Production	
		1999	Indicated 2000	1999	Indicated 2000	1999	Indicated 2000
Thousands                                      Number of Units                                      Thousands							
TENNESSEE							
Apples	lb.	—	---	—	—	9,500	9,000
Corn for grain	bu.	570	590	102	108	58,140	63,720
Cotton <sup>1</sup>	lb.	565	595	505	565	595	700
Hay, All (excluding Alfalfa)	ton	1,850	1,900	2.00	2.20	3,700	4,180
Peaches	lb.	—	—	—	—	3,100	2,000
Soybeans	bu.	1,190	1,160	18	26	21,420	30,160
Tobacco, All	lb.	63.2	54.2	1,941	2,170	122,601	117,592
E. Dark-fired (22)	lb.	7.0	7.9	2,280	2,500	15,960	19,750
W. Dark-fired (23)	lb.	.57	.63	2,500	3,000	1,425	1,890
Burley (31)	lb.	55.0	45.0	1,890	2,100	103,950	94,500
One-sucker (35)	lb.	.60	.66	2,110	2,200	1,266	1,452
Winter Wheat	bu.	340	350	54.0	52.0	18,360	18,200
UNITED STATES							
Apples	lb.	---	---	---	---	10,579,600	10,677,100
Corn for grain	bu.	70,537	73,059	133.8	141.8	9,437,337	10,362,374
Cotton <sup>1</sup>	lb.	13,424.9	14,123.0	607	622	16,968.0	18,315.1
Hay, All (excluding Alfalfa)	ton	39,175	38,424	1.92	1.94	75,153	74,459
Peaches	lb.	---	---	---	---	2,525,400	2,677,100
Soybeans	bu.	72,476	73,474	36.5	39.5	2,642,908	2,899,571
Tobacco, All	lb.	647.16	492.24	1,997	2,220	1,292,692	1,092,907
E. Dark-fired (22)	lb.	10.75	11.90	2,304	2,550	24,773	30,350
W. Dark-fired (23)	lb.	4.07	4.43	2,612	3,172	10,630	14,050
Burley (31)	lb.	303.60	201.00	1,829	2,048	555,185	411,717
One-sucker (35)	lb.	3.45	3.66	2,325	2,446	8,021	8,952
Winter Wheat	bu.	35,572	35,401	47.8	45.0	1,699,989	1,594,321

<sup>1</sup> Production in 480-lb. net weight bales. U.S. production includes American-Pima cotton.

**REMINDER:** All forecasts in this report are based on conditions about September 1.